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ABSTRACT

A concise summary of statistical data, this booklet examines the possible career motivations, social influences, and economic factors that might affect teacher mobility patterns in the state of Wisconsin. (LH)

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Teacher Mobility In Wisconsin Public Schools

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TEACHER MOBILITY IN WISCONSIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Section I: Introduction

Do teachers who enter teaching remain in the profession or do they use teaching as a stepping stone to other occupations? Is the rate of teacher turnover increasing or decreasing? Does the size of the district or salaries paid have an impact on teacher mobility? How does teacher movement relate to student achievement? These are examples of questions that are being asked concerning teacher mobility.

A review of the literature revealed a limited amount of information about teacher mobility.

A National Education Association study indicated that fewer teachers are moving from one school system to another. The percent of teachers which were in the same school system the previous year was 80.5% in 1966, 83.9% in 1971 and 88.3% in 1976.

A study by Coleman in Canada found that teacher turnover is declining rapidly and is a minimal problem.

Kowitz, in an Oklahoma study, found that there was higher mobility among women teachers with mobility decreasing with age. Age was not a factor in the mobility of men. Marital status was not a factor in mobility.

Pedersen indicated in a speech at an American Education Association Meeting that teacher movement was heaviest within rather than between the metropolitan districts. He also made the point that economic correlates assume an important role in teacher supply and demographic factors have a limited impact.

A study by Mueller at Harris Teachers College attempted to determine whether those who enter teaching remain in the profession or use teaching as a stepping stone to other occupations. Only 4.5% of the 1970 graduating class compared to 8.8% of the 1965 graduating class had left teaching for noneducational employment. The study also found that more men than women and more whites than blacks were likely to leave the profession.

Keeler and Mc Call of Rand Corporation found that teacher movement is negatively related to reading ability. This analysis suggests that teacher turnover is a serious problem.

Section II: Analysis of Wisconsin Study

This section describes the design and analysis of a study of teacher mobility conducted in Wisconsin for the school year 1977-78 and 1978-79. School districts report classroom teachers to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction each year. For the purposes of this study the full time equivalency (FTE) count of teachers was compared for succeeding years to determine the plus or minus change. In Table I below you will note there was a decrease in the number of teachers for both years of the study. The number of new teachers in the school districts were determined by identifying those with no previous experience in the local experience column of the annual report. Adding the decrease in teacher staff to the number of new teachers with no local experience determined the total number of teachers leaving the school districts in the state.

Table I

Statewide Analyses

1977-78

76-77 FTE	77-78 FTE	+ or - Change	No. of Teachers New to Districts	No. of Teachers Leaving Districts	Percent of Teachers Leaving Districts
51,214	50,945	-269	4,070	4,339	8.5%

1978-79

77-78 FTE	78-79 FTE	+ or - Change	No. of Teachers New to Districts	No. of Teachers Leaving Districts	Percent of Teachers Leaving Districts
50,945	50,813	-132	4,372	4,502	8.8%

The percent of teachers leaving districts was calculated by dividing the total number of teachers leaving by the number of teachers for the previous year. The increase of teachers leaving districts for the second year of the study does not appear to be significant. Therefore the current mobility rate of teachers in Wisconsin would be between 8.5 - 9.0 percent.

Teacher mobility by Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) and Regions are shown in Tables II and III. A CESA is a cluster of school districts; a Region is a cluster of CESAs.

Table II

Mobility of Teachers by CESA

CESA	Percent of Teachers Leaving Districts in CESA	
	1976-77	1977-78
1	8.3%	8.1%
2	8.0	6.7
3	8.0	12.6
4	9.2	7.2
5	8.4	7.6
6	8.5	10.7
7	8.3	9.6
8	6.9	6.5
9	7.7	6.8
10	7.6	8.4
11	9.9	10.1
12	12.0	12.9
13	8.7	9.2
14	11.1	13.6
15	11.2	9.9
16	8.8	8.4
17	7.5	7.5
18	9.9	12.1
19	6.7	6.8

The reader will note a rather consistent pattern (with a few exceptions) of teacher mobility in each CESA for the two years.

Table III

Mobility of Teachers by Geographic Region

Geographic Region	Percent of Teachers Leaving Districts in Region	
	1976-77	1977-78
Northwest (CESAs 1, 4, 5, 6)	8.6%	8.7%
Northeast (CESAs 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10	7.7	8.2
Southwest (CESAs 11, 12, 14, 15)	11.0	11.1
Southeast (CESAs 13, 16, 17, 18, 19)	7.9	8.3

The teacher mobility be Region is highly consistent for the two years of the study.

The first year of the study included further analyses of teacher mobility by salary level (Table IV) and district size based on enrollment (Table V).

Table IV

Mobility of Teachers by Contract Salary

Contract Salary Range (1977-78) of Districts	Percent of Teachers Leaving Districts 1976-77
Under 11,000	19.2%
11,000 - 11,999	11.8
12,000 - 12,999	9.3
13,000 - 13,999	8.7
14,000 - 14,999	7.0
Over 15,000	7.2
All districts in the state	8.5

The results indicate a significantly higher teacher mobility among lower salaried teachers.

Table V

Mobility of Teachers by Enrollment Size of District

Enrollment Size (1977-78) of Districts	Percent of Teachers Leaving Districts 1976-77
Under 499	13.8%
500 - 799	12.5
800 - 1,099	9.0
1,100 - 1,499	9.9
1,500 - 2,499	8.4
2,499 and Over	7.7
All districts in the state	8.5

A significantly higher teacher mobility is indicated in those districts with lower enrollments.

Section III: Summary/Conclusions

Teacher mobility in Wisconsin appears to have leveled off at between 8.5% and 9.0% annually. This is a reduction from a mobility of 15 to 20% in the mid 1960s.

Research of the literature indicates a higher mobility among females than males. The Wisconsin study revealed a higher mobility of teachers from small school districts and from districts paying lower salaries to teachers. Geographically, the Southwest Region of the state had a relatively high turnover of teachers compared to the other three Regions.

Fewer teachers are leaving the teaching profession to take other positions now than in the mid 1960s. More men that women and more whites than blacks are likely to leave the profession for other positions.

Only a limited amount of research indicates that teacher mobility is negatively related to student achievement. Further research is definitely needed to determine the educational impact of this variable.

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